

# A PLEA FOR UNION.

28

## A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE SPECIAL CONVENTION

OF

THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

IN THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA,

IN ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA,

SEPTEMBER 6TH, 1844.

BY STEPHEN H. TYNG, D. D.

RECTOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY,

PHILADELPHIA.

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# INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY

## CHAPTER I



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## S E R M O N .

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ACTS, vii: 26.

*Sirs, ye are Brethren.*

I trust I shall need no excuse upon an occasion like this, for attempting to promote the cause, and to advocate the claims of union among my brethren. Such an effort is equally the result of my solemn conviction of personal duty, and the spontaneous expression of the state and feelings of my own heart. We have never been called together, nor are we ever likely to meet in time to come, under circumstances, or for the performance of duties, which could make equal demands upon us, for the cultivation of a tender spirit of mutual forbearance; for candid and generous concessions in mutual constructions of opinions and motives; for a calm, dispassionate, and discriminating exercise of individual judgment; and above all, for the simple reliance of every heart upon the presence and guidance of the Divine Redeemer, its fixed remembrance of unceasing responsibility to him,—and its earnest and affectionate offerings of secret prayer, for his special direction and blessing. And there are the strongest motives, arising from the importance of the duties which are now devolved upon us, the consequences which must result from them,—the interests which must be affected by them,—and the extended observation abroad under which we discharge them, to lead us, to lay aside



every other feeling, than the single desire to know and to do the will of God, and to glorify him, in our present consultation for the care and edification of his Church.

For myself, I am ready to say with Bishop Taylor, “I shall not be ashamed to acknowledge, that I am weary and toiled, with rowing up and down, in the seas of questions which the interests of Christendom have commenced.” I long to find, and to abide in, that unity of the spirit, and that bond of peace, especially in our own household of faith, which the Saviour has given us as the mark of his disciples, and which the Apostle so earnestly urges us to endeavour to keep. The condition and the mind of man, and the maintenance and defence of the truth of God, render inevitable, frequent discussions of the avowed principles of revealed truth; and involve an equally inevitable difference of opinion upon many of their subjects. And it would be neither wise nor just to arrest or prohibit these discussions, even were it possible. But amidst them all, the bond of peace and love, may be, and must be, preserved unbroken still. “In order to this,” as Bishop Taylor again beautifully remarks, “God has described our way, plain, certain and determined; and although he was pleased to leave us indetermined, in (some of) the questions of exterior communion; yet he put it past all question, that we are bound to be charitable. He hath placed the questions of the STATE OF SEPARATION, in the dark, in hidden and undiscerned regions. But he hath opened the windows of heaven, and given great light to us, teaching how we are to demean ourselves in the STATE OF CONJUNCTION.” Thankful shall I be, if it shall be the will of God, to make me now, under the guidance of his own Spirit, the humble instrument of leading my assembled brethren, more

affectionately and entirely, in heart and judgment, into this “*state of conjunction.*”

For this purpose, I have been led to select the present text, not merely as a motto, the spirit of which is to be followed out ; but also, from an analogy of circumstances, which has struck my mind, and which I thought might be easily and wisely employed, to give force to the instructions to be derived from the appeal itself. St. Stephen adduces it, as the remonstrance of Moses to two Israelites, in whose personal strife he had interfered, for the purpose of their mutual reconciliation. “Sirs, ye are brethren, why do ye wrong one to another.” They were partakers of a common profession of faith ; they were members of the same visible Church, in covenant with God ; they were exposed to the same oppressive influence of outward hostility ; they were partakers of common sufferings ; and they were encouraged with the same hope of approaching deliverance. Why should they do wrong one to the other ? If all these common interests, and mutual ties, could not overcome their personal strife, and keep these sons of Israel at one, what arguments or motives to unity of feeling and action, could be supposed available with them ? May I not bring all these facts into an equally appropriate application to the brethren and friends, to whom I now address myself ? Are we not brethren ? Are we not entirely united in fundamental faith ; in Church communion and discipline, and in our views of its importance ; in exposure to outward assaults ; in conflicts with various foes on every side ? Are we not united in the sorrows which we are required to bear ; and in the bright and blessed hope of future eternal deliverance, by the one Great Redeemer, by whose name we are called ? Why should we not be one,



in affection? In reciprocal edifying and encouragement? In mutual advice, support, and consolation? And one even in considering and deciding, the important points for judgment and action, to which the Providence of Almighty God has here called us? Have we any lines of division, or motives for separation, at all to be compared in importance and worth with the reasons for our union, or with the facts in which we are actually agreed? Let us then consider together, some of the facts which make up our "state of conjunction," and allow the questions of our "state of separation" to remain for the present, "in the dark, in their hidden and undiscerned regions."

I. We are perfectly united in fundamental articles of faith. Here, we "are brethren." Our Church has wisely confined her authoritative declarations of the Christian faith, to a comparatively few fundamental and indispensable articles. She has expressed these in a very general manner, but in the most distinct and intelligible terms. She has thus displayed a peculiar evidence of her conformity, to both the Scriptural and the Primitive standard. Thus the great doctrines which the Scripture reveals, are declared as certain and indisputable facts to be received; and then are left, without a minute definition of all the consequences which man's wisdom may suppose to be justly derived from them; to be accepted upon the authority of him who has revealed them. Thus the early disciples of the Lord proclaimed their creeds from the teachings of Holy Scripture, in simple and intelligible terms, and were perfectly joined together in the same mind and judgment, because the articles of faith which they imposed, as necessary to be received, were few and easily de-

fined. The commencement of most of the heresies and schisms which have destroyed the peace of the Christian Church, may be found in the attempt of man's philosophy, to define specific doctrines more accurately, and to carry out their consequences more minutely, than God has been pleased to do, and then to impose these conclusions of man upon men, and to insist upon their acceptance, as if they were the teachings of God. This spirit was very early displayed in the Christian history, and it has continued its action in every age, avowing the purpose of producing greater unity, among the followers of Christ, but uniformly leading to more entire and numerous divisions, both of sentiment and feeling. The multiplied divisions among professing Christians in modern days, are witnesses of the same declared purpose, and of the same actual results, in a vast variety of forms. Our Church has taken a position directly opposed to this scholastic system, the parent of necessary division, and has adhered to the primitive system of a simple and easily defined faith, as in this relation, the only permanent bond of union and peace. Her confession of faith rests upon the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures alone, for instruction unto salvation. It proclaims the glorious and satisfying doctrine of the Trinity of persons in the Godhead, as the foundation upon which all other articles rest. It establishes the perfect Deity, and the full propitiation of the Son of God. It teaches the personal agency, and the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost. It avows the entire corruption of our own nature; its impotency to any thing spiritually good; and its absolute need of the grace and inspiration of the Holy Ghost to the production of any good works. It maintains man's free justification in the merits of Christ, by faith only. It insists upon the per-



severing obedience of a Christian life, as the necessary and only adequate evidence of a living faith. And it teaches us to ascribe all our salvation, to the special grace and mercy of him who hath chosen us in Christ. Now here are fundamental articles of faith in which we are all agreeing. I do not mean to say, that these are the only such articles. It is not my purpose to define and recite all the articles of our common faith, but to illustrate and display the fact, which might be carried out in many other particulars, that we have a sufficient common faith, upon which to maintain an entire unity of spirit, in the recollection that we are brethren. I do not mean either, to undervalue the points of doctrine, or the several illustrations of doctrine, about which we should still differ in judgment. But I freely confess, after having passed through more than twenty years of participation in the various discussions which have been maintained in our Church, the result of my whole experience, is the conviction, that the great body of our clergy and intelligent laity, are far more of one mind in the precious and abiding faith, which the Lord hath taught, and the Church hath received, than some others are prepared to think. This unity of sentiment has become even more settled and manifest, within the last few years. The animated internal controversies which have been carried on among us within this period, have had a very decided influence, to the amazement of surrounding observers, to heal, and not to increase or perpetuate divisions; to consolidate, and not to rend the Church, and to create a clearer mutual understanding, or to manifest in undoubted light, an actual unity of sentiment which was before hidden and unknown. There has been a vast increase of faithful scriptural preaching in our Churches, a spreading



uniformity of purpose among our clergy, in teaching that great salvation, which the Father hath offered, which the Son hath perfected, and which the Spirit applies to the souls of men. There has been also a manifest correspondent increase in a due estimate of the importance of that organization of the Church which constitutes its peculiar adaptation, to be a firm and lasting pillar and ground of the truth. We have been thus almost unconsciously led to a far greater union in our views of divine truth, and in our desire and determination to maintain the Church of God in the integrity of its doctrine and discipline, as we have received them, than even we ourselves had dared to hope. Our Church is this day, I presume to say, far more really and deeply, united in judgment, and settled in mutual affection, throughout its whole extent, than it has ever been in any previous portion of its history.

“It cannot be denied,” as an eminent minister of the English Church remarks, “that we live in times, in which, as religion excites much attention and discussion, so great diversities of opinion exist, much error abounds. Even good men in contending for what they esteem the faith once delivered to the Saints, are tempted to push particular sentiments to extremes; and some are carried into no small degree of extravagance. Now where, under circumstances like these, may we look for repose to our own minds; for the correction of existing errors; for the prevention of threatening evils? May we not hope to attain these most desirable objects, in proportion, as content with speaking as the oracles of God, we adhere to such wise and temperate statements, as the writings of our Church exhibit; dwell chiefly as she does, both in our meditations, and in our teaching, on the

great things, in which all who think alike of Christ, of sin, of holiness, of the world, and of heaven, are agreed; and which are actually the subjects dwelt upon, and that must be dwelt upon, in the instruction of mankind; as we endeavour to hold them fast, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus: considering how firm a ground, and how strong a bond of union, they form among us, though differing upon inferior points? Can we indeed *believe* as the articles of our Church pronounce? Would we *teach* as her Homilies have set us the example? Do we *pray* as her Liturgy leads us to do? In what then do we differ? In what that need excite any thing more than temperate brotherly discussion? We may hold somewhat more, or somewhat less, concerning predestination and perseverance. Somewhat more, or somewhat less, concerning the imputation of guilt, and of righteousness. Somewhat more, or somewhat less, concerning the blessings conferred in the Sacraments, and by the divinely appointed ministry of man; and yet we may be so substantially agreed, that our differences need never dis-unite us, or impair our cordial sympathy and affection.”—*Rev. John Scott.* We have no right to ask for the concession of judgments maturely formed, and conscientiously entertained, upon points of doctrine not absolutely defined from Holy Scripture, by the authority of the Church. But we may ask for the yielding to each other, affectionately and temperately, the same personal authority to search and see; and the same personal right to be thoroughly persuaded in their own mind, which we claim for ourselves. It requires nothing but an united determination on the part of the clergy, to preserve this forbearing stand, to maintain a permanent and happy union among our Churches, upon this first ground of our one



fundamental faith. The effect of such a determination on their part, would be to give great satisfaction to the Churches under their care, and vastly to increase the influence for spiritual benefit among men, both of their own ministry, of their personal example, and of the Church itself, in whose real welfare, their interest is cordial and active. Upon this first ground therefore, of our actual union in fundamental faith, would I plead the appeal of the text, "Sirs, ye are Brethren."

II. We are entirely united in Church communion, and in cordial attachment to the Church of which we are members. There has been a steady, constant growth of unity in our general judgment and feeling, in regard to the importance, and to the authority, of that ecclesiastical organization, in which we are bound together, as one household, in our profession of the faith of Christ. It is a feature in our present condition, which has been equally manifested in every section of our Church. It is instantly discerned and acknowledged, by those who set themselves in opposition to the principles of ecclesiastical authority, which we feel compelled to maintain. Nor is there any difference to be justly alleged among our clergy, in the evidences, which labours to promote, propagate, and defend the Church, afford, of their actual personal feeling and estimation, in this connexion. We have unitedly received, and we earnestly adhere to, a ministry which we unfeignedly believe, Christ our Lord established for his Church; and which his apostles, beyond all reasonable dispute, as it appears to us, maintained and transmitted, in opening the privileges and blessings of this Church to mankind. We unitedly believe it unlawful for us,

to subvert, or annul, an organization which the Lord hath constituted, as the law of his house. We could not therefore feel justified, in ministering under, or acknowledging any professed authority, which does not conform to this apostolic standard, and derive itself from this divine appointment.

Calvin remarks in his celebrated letter to Cardinal Sadolet, "In that form of the Church, which the apostles instituted, we have the only model of a true Church, and whosoever deviates from it, in the smallest degree, is in error." While he acknowledges in the same letter, "That our discipline," (viz: that of Geneva) "is not such as the ancient Church professed, we do not deny." "As to our doctrine, we appeal to the ancient Church." This principle of Calvin's, is the simple one upon which we stand. "In that form of the Church which the apostles instituted, we have the only model of a true Church." It is because we are fully convinced, that our Church is, in its essential features, precisely that, and is directly derived from that, retaining and transmitting its constituted powers and blessings, conferred by divine appointment, that we acknowledge in ourselves, no right either to forsake its communion, or to concede the just claims, of its Scriptural ministry, and its divinely appointed Sacraments. In these views of the importance and authority of our Church, we are perfectly united. In declaring them, I speak the honest and mature conviction, and judgment, I am sure, of the clergy who are here assembled. To the Church, as thus divinely constituted, we are unitedly attached. And no imputation could be more unjust, than that of looseness of adherence to this Church, or of indifference to the privilege and blessing, of her manifestly valid and



regular ministry, as applied to any of those, who have consecrated their lives, in these stormy days, to the service of Christ in his Church, in this ministry received from him.

But beyond our unity of sentiment at this point, we are also entirely agreeing, in very important, and sufficient views, of the office and authority of the Church, as the keeper and witness of the word of God, and the appointed teacher and interpreter of its truths. We freely acknowledge and cheerfully submit to the authority which the Church hath, in controversies of faith. The points of doctrine which she hath ruled, and laid before us, as taught in the divine word, we receive without controversy, as facts which are wholly settled and determined. Discussions of such doctrines, for further intelligence and explanation, we freely permit. But controversy with such doctrines in themselves, or questioning of their truth, and their authority, we cannot allow. For us, very many points of faith are thus settled, not only by the views which we personally have, of the teachings of the divine word, but by the authoritative interpretation which the Church has given of these divine teachings. The present admirable Bishop of Calcutta has expressed views upon this subject, in which I imagine we should all perfectly agree, in very precise and perspicuous language. "The Church," says he, "is the pillar and ground, (or *stay* as our margin renders it) of the truth, MINISTERIALLY, and among men, as it is the appointed means, of deriving from Holy writ, the great, obvious, and necessary truths of Revelation, and duly upholding them in the world. The Church is the pillar and ground of the truth, not *personally* and *absolutely*, for in this sense, Christ alone is the truth. Not *authoritatively* and *infallibly*, for thus the sacred

Scriptures are the only standard of truth. But *instrumentally* and *liturgically*, of truth as clearly revealed in the oracles of God; and expounded, preached, and maintained in a weak and erring world. The Church is the means by which God upholds and preserves his truth amongst mankind. It furnishes a succession of men to expound and inculcate the Gospel. It is the voice and trumpet of truth to a careless world. When the Church is silent, truth is in exile; and division, heresy and sin desolate the fold. But when the body of the faithful discharge their high and holy function, and appeal to the unerring records of the revealed word, for all the tenets they inculcate; then there is a rallying point for the wandering sheep, a solace for the distressed conscience, an interpreter for the inquiring penitent, a pillar in the border of the land, unto the Lord. God commits to his Church, the ministry of reconciliation. This Church he erects as the pillar and stay of the doctrine of the cross. This is the means of retaining it on earth, and preventing its perishing from the memory of a forgetful world. With respect to them, the Church in proportion as she is faithful to her trust, sustains the Gospel, celebrates it in her preaching, seals it in her Sacraments, preserves it pure and sincere by her confessions, and confirms it if necessary, by her blood. The faith is in this world in the midst of enemies. The fallen heart of man opposes the light, and grace, and holiness, of the doctrine of Christ. What then is to sustain the doctrine of Christ in such conflicts? What to be the *stay* in the disastrous retreat? What to be the *pillar* in the midst of these ruins? What to be the *ground* unmoved in the overthrow? All other systems of religion, are pillars of human error. The Church, as propounding the simple, but infallible doctrines of



divine revelation, is the only pillar and ground of the truth."

These sentiments must be considered by us all, as undoubtedly wise and just. We should all agree in them, probably without hesitation. But how important and real is the basis of union which they afford! How inferior in consequence, are the points in reference to Church authority and discipline, upon which we might differ in opinion, when compared with these. There is here a sufficient unity of sentiment, upon which to urge a still more entire unity of feeling and affection, and to carry out the appeal of the text, as an exhortation to mutual forbearance and edification, "Sirs, ye are Brethren." We cannot here, with a good conscience, separate in our views of doctrine and authority; why should we separate from each other in personal affection, and mutual tenderness and regard? If we are ever to find and enjoy, anything like spiritual union on earth, the promised gift of the Saviour to his disciples, past events have sufficiently proved that we are to seek for it, and to expect it now, with a reasonable prospect of success, only within the limits of our own spiritual household. If it cannot be secured and maintained here, the constitution of a Church is in itself proved useless, so far as we are concerned, and we are thrown off, like separate pilgrims through a wilderness, to reach our desired home as best we may, without sympathy or aid from others. Let us listen to the lessons of providence, and laying aside, every latent and remaining spirit of mutual hostility or doubt, learn to love one another, with a pure heart, fervently.

III. We are entirely united, in our exposure to outward assaults. Here again, we are brethren. Whether we refer

to what we suffer, from the multiplied Protestant denominations around us, who renounce, and not unfrequently revile, our Episcopacy, or from the Romish Church, which denies our ministry, and the pure truth of God, which we defend, we have no separate personal advantages, no individual grounds of exception, from the hostility to which we are exposed. There was a time, when the former class of persons affected to distinguish in their warfare upon our Church, between different classes of our clergy; assuming that some were less strongly attached to the principles which they opposed, than others, and excepting them therefore, from the controversy which they were waging with these. It was said, not to be Episcopacy itself, but extreme and unjust extensions of the claims of Episcopacy, against which they contended. There seemed to be a hope indulged, that the Church might be thus divided against itself, and its strength wasted in partial or mutual warfare, while one portion of the clergy were selected, as the objects of assault, and a desire for peace with others, was at the same time continually avowed. It was an attempt too well adapted to succeed. Let God be praised, that its success if it had any, was transitory and very partial. But its failure, and the clear evidence thus furnished, that in the points at issue between us and them, there is but little variety of judgment, and no readiness of concession, among any of our ministers, have led to an unmasked and unrelaxing hostility to the Church itself. It is now a warfare with Episcopacy and by that name. It has ceased to distinguish between different theories of Episcopacy. It will grant peace upon no terms, other than an entire renunciation of the claims which we make to a Scriptural ministry, and of our derived right thereto, through an



appointed succession from the Apostles. This is a point which we can never with a good conscience yield. We are therefore left, I fear, with but little hope of toleration in this quarter. We believe ourselves contending for the faith in the ministry which the Lord established. And precious and desirable, as is peace abroad to us, as to all Christians, we cannot make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience to obtain it. This resulting position of necessary separation from many Christians around whom we highly esteem, is much to be regretted. But it appears inevitable, and it is not we who have sought it, nor can the blame of it rest upon us. Even those among us, who have laboured most earnestly, "to maintain, and set forwards as much as lieth in us, quietness, peace, and love, among all Christian people," have become with sorrow convinced, that in our present circumstances, the hope of accomplishing this is vain. When we speak of peace, they make themselves ready for war. The continued avowal, that this vehement hostility is still only against extreme views, which are supposed to be but partially entertained, could be received with more regard, if the excited opposition were directed only against those to whom such views have been imputed. But happily for us, we are here again made one. The firm and equal devotion of all, to the principles of the Church, has been thoroughly proved. The uniform outward pressure has created I trust, a new power in the bond of mutual confidence within. And surrounding hostility has consolidated, and rendered more compact, the body which it was designed to sunder.

"There are never wanting," says Bishop Wilson, "those who, professing to disregard forms generally, yet magnify their own; who seem to mistake a spirit of separation for zeal;

who sometimes proselyte, rather than convert ; who indulge an almost indiscriminate prejudice against every thing ancient and established ; who hover around the borders of the most pious and regular clergy, and often do little else, however upright their motives, than make inroads on the flock, and disturb the minds of the young and inexperienced ; and then mask the whole, with the fair names of charity and union, and the non-importance of forms, whilst their own charity is obviously narrow, and their own peculiar ordinances are made prominent, and almost essential to salvation.” We have seen this remarkably illustrated within a few years past ; and the experience must necessarily lead in our Church to a withdrawing from those who would thus cause divisions. But it will also lead to a more entire union within our own body, and the effect of the contest, will be an overruling for good to us, in the attaining of this result. Still let us follow out the attending advice which the same eminent writer gives in this connexion. “ True charity will dispose the considerate Christian to regard these very persons, irregular as they are in their notions of discipline, in the most favorable light, and to bless God for the real good, which may have eventually resulted from the distractions of human sentiments, and from the anomalies of the Protestant sects throughout Christendom, however little we can approve of much in their spirit and conduct.”

In regard to our controversy with the Romish Church, and our defence of the truth of God committed to us, against their assaults, we are equally united. The Protestant spirit of our Church is with manifestly few exceptions, I rejoice to say, a living and pervading spirit throughout all her members. In maintaining our defence against Rome, the habits



of thought, and education, and the differing convictions, of individuals, may lead some to press the particular arguments of Scriptural truth, and others to employ the weapons of primitive consent, and historical evidences and traditional remonstrance, in a single selection, and to the apparent neglect of the other branches of argument. Yet it is perfectly evident, that an entire and faithful anti-romish stand, is the determination of all. She cannot, therefore, justly look with more reasonable favour upon the feelings towards her, of one class, of our clergy, than of another, however she may have more reason to dread, as I think, the effect of one class of arguments employed, than of any of the residue. But we must here bear the same assaults, and be made partakers of the same destiny. With whatever class of foes we contend,—against whatever descriptions of error we lift up our voice,—to whatever impending hosts we stand opposed, as the servants of God in his Church, we have a perfectly common interest, an indissoluble unity of experience before us. We stand or fall together. Let us then cheerfully and entirely dismiss every rising feeling of mutual rivalry and contention upon inferior issues. Let our mutual discussions be friendly and affectionate. Let not outward opposers find us divided from each other within. But in the cultivation of a fraternal and mutually sustaining spirit, let us remember in all our subjects for consideration and settlement, that we are brethren.

IV. We are united I trust, beyond all present circumstances of outward agreement, in a bright and blessed hope, of eternal redemption and peace, through our glorious Lord and Saviour. To this everlasting bond of union, I desire now

to call the feelings and thoughts of all who hear me. Happy is the prospect of a world, where the people of God shall see eye to eye, and where perfect love shall have cast out fear, and torment of every kind. In our present condition, as the disciples of the Lord, we have a common burden of trial and care. If we are the Israel of God, we are still, either under the oppression of bondage, or amidst the sorrows of an unfinished wilderness. Occasionally, trials come upon us, in every relation of life, with a peculiar power ; and increasing difficulties in our path, require the exercise of a stronger faith, and need the joys of a brighter hope. But this blessed hope remains, as an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast. There is a rest to be received and enjoyed, when our earthly work has been completed ; and the greater is our spirit of fidelity and love in enduring the trial, the happier will be our enjoyment of the succeeding rest. Washed in the blood of the Lamb ; clothed and adorned with the garments of salvation, and the robe of righteousness which he hath provided ; upheld in conflict, sustained in duty, and carried through our appointed day, in faithful obedience to God our Saviour, by the divine and covenanted power of his Spirit ; kept thus faithful unto death ; we may then together enter into the joy and kingdom of our Lord, and receive the promised and glorious crown of life, laid up by him. In this precious hope we are brethren, as we are made companions in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. In the sorrows which we bear upon the road, our interest is one. Whether our grief be found in the secret bitterness which each heart knoweth for itself, or in the anxious trembling which our hearts together feel for the ark of God, our portion is a common one. As



we press forward through such dispensations, in hope of the glory of God, we may well subdue every proud and self-complacent feeling in unfeigned humility and self-abasement; we may well cultivate the tenderest sympathy towards each other, and towards all who participate in any of the sorrows which we mutually bear; we may well direct peculiar efforts to gain and keep the mind which was in Christ, and be jealous of every thought and feeling, which is not formed in earnest secret prayer, and upon which the presence and blessing of the Holy Spirit has not been fervently implored. But in the midst of trial, let the blessed influence of the prospect before us, rest like the refreshing dew of heaven upon our minds. Let us think of ourselves, and of each other, as if even now standing together in the triumphant body which will surround the throne of God and the Lamb. Let us anticipate the emotions and judgments of that great day, and look upon each other, and act towards each other, with the reciprocal estimation, which will then control our judgments, if clothed in robes of peace, we bow together before the Redeemer there. How mutually kind, how forbearing, how tender, how charitable, will be the sentiments of each redeemed mind, as the saints of God are gathered in that glorious sanctuary. Beloved brethren, let us strive to bring that spirit down to earth, and let the meekness and gentleness of Christ pervade our whole assembly, and fill and control each heart, as we pass together through the deep waters, which threaten to overwhelm us. Look forward to the promised land. Soon shall we meet together there in peace. Its hills and vallies, upon which the eye of God continually rests, spread brightly before us. When we gain that glorious home one song will employ our tongues; one spirit will

fill and actuate our souls ; one Lord, one faith, one heavenly baptism, will bind us forever together, as one body, before the God and Father of all, who will be above all, and through all, and in you all. O, let us call down this heavenly spirit, and as brethren in a common hope, through the righteousness of our Great God and Saviour Jesus Christ ; speaking the truth in love, let us grow up together in him in all things, who is the head, even Christ ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

In making this humble effort to unite the feelings and views of my beloved brethren and friends in this congregation, I trust no one will consider me assuming anything not properly belonging to this especial place and duty, as a preacher of the Gospel to my brethren. I would be governed, as I know I must be judged, by the principles of duty which I thus, with great deference, for my brethren, lay down for them. We should have strong and reasonable hope, if such principles could prevail, and wrong and disuniting feelings could be laid aside ;—then would be found among us, a fully sufficient, and a permanent union, of opinion and judgment, upon all material questions of doctrine and duty in our Church. Then would the surrounding world, perceiving our order, and the steadfastness of our faith in Christ, honour us, as a faithful witness for the Lord. Then would the blessing of God rest upon our efforts to promote his glory, and to spread the power of his truth. Then would our meetings together be cheering and delightful to every heart, and we should part again from each other, refreshed by the influ-



ence of our mutual faith. Then should we look forward together to the glorious fruits of our present peace, in an eternal quietness and assurance at God's right hand. Then would a life of sincere and fruitful devotion to the honour of Jesus, in the proclamation of his Gospel, and the edifying of his Church, and the salvation of the souls of men, lead us down to a happy, holy, tranquil departure, to that far better part of being with him in his glory, which he hath set before us ; and our separation from the Church on earth in the hour of death, would be attended with no painful, but useless regrets,—on a life which had marred its peace, but had not edified its holiness, or promoted its joy. May the Lord give us all his heavenly grace, that we may thus manifest and exercise the mind which was in him ; and as we now unite in the outward signs of communion at his holy table, and go thence to the solemn duties in his Church, to which we are here called, may his blessed Spirit unite us all, still more closely in the bond of abiding peace and love.

